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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Veterinary Services

National Center for
Import and Export

Products Program

4700 River Road
Unit 40
Riverdale, MD 20737

SUBJECT: BSE: Minimal-Risk Regions and Importation of Commodities

TO: Importers, Brokers and Other Interested Parties

On January 4, 2005, USDA published a final rule which amends the regulations to provide for the importation of certain ruminants, ruminant products and byproducts from regions that pose a minimal risk of introducing bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) into the United States, and designates Canada as the first minimal-risk region (70 FR 460-553, Docket No. 03-080-3). These actions will continue to protect against the introduction of BSE into the United States while removing unnecessary prohibitions on the importation of certain commodities from minimal-risk regions for BSE. The rule finalizes, with changes, the proposed rule that USDA published in the *Federal Register* on November 4, 2003 (68 FR 62386-62405, Docket No. 03-080-1).

The effective date of the final rule is March 7, 2005. Until the effective date, only those commodities that were listed in the August 15, 2003 notice (republished May 6, 2004) will be eligible for importation from Canada, under the risk-mitigation measures specified in that notice.

Karen A. James-Preston
Director, Products Staff
Technical Trade Services
National Center for Import and Export